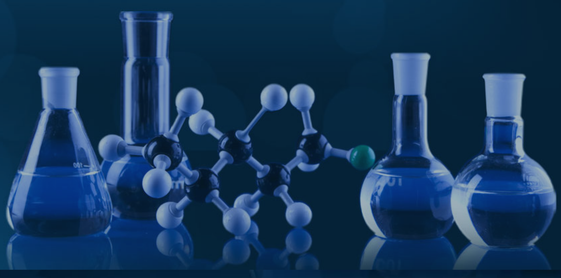

Parkinson's Disease

Parkinson's Disease

Parkinson's disease affects more than 10 million people worldwide today. Men are affected slightly more often than women. Symptoms include tremors, slowness, rigidity of movement and disturbances of posture. Drug treatment with Levodopa (also called L-dopa) and related drugs can temporarily improve symptoms. There are side effects that can occur with Levodopa including nausea, fatigue and orthostatic hypotension. Nutritional methods can be of help in many cases.

Excessive Iron And Manganese

Research indicates there is substantially increased concentrations of iron in the brains of Parkinson's patients *(Olanow, C.W., Neurology 49 (Suppl. 1), S26-S33, 1997)*. Elevated iron is associated with mental and physical rigidity. Manganese miners also have a higher-than-average incidence of Parkinson's disease.

Both minerals may have a direct neurotoxicity, or may replace other vital minerals in the brain such as copper and zinc. Elevated iron and manganese are often seen together on hair mineral tests. Dr. Paul C. Eck noted that the first mineral tests of Parkinson's patients often look better than average.

To help remove toxic metals, nutritional balancing programs use:

- antagonists such as zinc, copper, calcium and others
- chelators like vitamin C and alpha lipoic acid
- methods to assist the eliminative organs - the liver, kidneys, colon, skin and lungs
- balancing the oxidation rate to enhance energy production.

Liver Detoxification

Many Parkinson's patients have defective liver detoxification systems. Perhaps this is one reason Parkinson's is more common in men exposed to toxic chemicals, which may affect the liver. There are many other causes for sluggish liver activity, from diet to chronic infections. Toxic metals such as iron and others may accumulate in the liver, affecting its functioning.

Assisting the ability of the liver to detoxify can have a dramatic effect on Parkinson's patients. In a newsletter, Dr. Robert Rowan, MD, discusses a patient whose Parkinson's symptoms worsened if she missed a bowel movement and improved immediately upon having a bowel movement *(Second Opinion, Vol. 9, #10, October 2001)*.

This may seem strange. However, a 24-year study of 8000 men, part of the Honolulu Heart Program, found a strong correlation between constipation and Parkinson's disease. Those who had less than one bowel movement per day had 5 times greater chance of developing Parkinson's disease than those who had two or more bowel movements per day.

Constipation may be due to sluggish liver activity. Conversely, constipation allows more toxins to be reabsorbed and pass to the liver, affecting its functioning and contributing to sluggish bile flow and constipation. Just another reason to pay attention to the common symptom of constipation and give enough magnesium, black radish root, ox bile and pancreatin or other remedies to correct it. Glutathione, dandelion root, silymarin and other natural substances can also help detoxification by the liver.

Antioxidants

Oxidant damage appears to be very important in Parkinson's disease. Antioxidants including vitamins C, D and E, alpha-lipoic acid, ginkgo biloba, N-acetyl cysteine and acetyl-L- carnitine appear to be helpful. A study in 1988 found that vitamin E "profoundly reduces the risk of Parkinsons" *(Golbe, L., and Ferrell, T., Archives of Neurology, 45:(12),1350-53, 1988)*. Vitamin D levels have also been shown to be low in Parkinson's patients.

Dr. Stanley Fahn, Chairman of the Department of Neurology at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, evaluated the effectiveness of vitamins C and E in a large group of Parkinson's patients over several years. He found these two simple nutrients extended the time before medication was needed by 2.2 years *(Annals NY Academy of Science, 570:186-96, 1989)*.

NAC or N-acetyl cysteine is not only a powerful antioxidant. It also reduces nitric oxide, which has been implicated as a causative factor in Parkinson's. Acetyl-L-carnitine was shown in 1995 to completely prevent the development of Parkinson's-like symptoms in animals exposed to a toxin that usually produces Parkinson's symptoms *(Steffin, V. and Santiago, M, Human Exp. Toxicol.,14:865-71, 1995)*.

Energy production

It is known that Parkinson's is associated with a failure of energy production in the brain cells. Improving the oxidation rate, eliminating toxic metals and giving specific nutrients to enhance energy production in the cells may all be helpful. Vitamins C and E and other antioxidants help preserve the energy-producing structures in the mitochondria.

More exotic nutrients such as NADH (nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide), coenzyme Q-10, phophatidylserine and acetyl-L-carnitine also show promise for enhancing cellular energy production in Parkinson's patients.

The Glutathione Miracle

The nutrient, glutathione, is very low in Parkinson's disease patients. Glutathione helps preserve brain tissue by preventing free radical damage. In a landmark study at the Department of Neurology, Sassari, Italy, all Parkinson's patients given intravenous glutathione reported improvement of symptoms with a 42% decline in disability *(Prog. Neuropsyopharmacol. Biol. Psychiatry 20(7): 1159-70, 1996)*. Perhaps this has not received much publicity because glutathione cannot be patented. Dr. David Perlmutter, MD reported this therapy has been "nothing short of miraculous" for his patients. *(Townsend Letter, #216, July 2001, 52-57)*. He also writes about it in a book entitled "BrainRecovery.com".

A Total Approach

Natural methods offer much hope to prevent and treat Parkinson's disease, especially a complete program of diet, supplement and lifestyle modification. In addition to a hair analysis and nutritional balancing program, other nutrients mentioned above may be most helpful.